

Director's Forum Minutes
State Laboratory Institute
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm / February 6, 2006 / Room 202

Attendees: Peter Belanger, Alan Borne, Dina Caloggero, John Fontana, Cheryl Gauthier, Mariah Grazioplene, Garry Greer, Linda Han, Austin Nagle, Kathleen Nawn, Ellen Nelson, Joseph Peppe, Charles Salemi, Sandra Smole, Marcia Stowell, Xingtai Wang, Barbara Werner
Excused: Sally Cheney, Paul Elvin, Harvey George, Raimond Konomi, Julianne Nassif, Alexander Sloutsky
Chair: Alfred DeMaria
Minutes: Kristen Pribeck

General Business (A. DeMaria)

\$1.2 million was added to the State Lab budget in the House 1 budget for FY 2007. A. DeMaria and Ellen Nelson lead a tour of the facilities to Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) staff. Upgrades to the building's infrastructure Lab Bureau staff appreciated the information provided at the all-staff meeting held on Tuesday, January 31. Continuity of operations plans (COOPs) for each laboratory will need to be developed, as there is not one location that could handle all tests performed by SLI labs. Memorandums of agreement should be worked out with in-state or regional laboratories to ensure that operations can be maintained in an emergency event.

State Laboratory Institute Building (E. Nelson, A. DeMaria)

Ellen Nelson, A. DeMaria, and senior UMMS Facilities staff conducted a tour of the State Laboratory Institute building for Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) staff. UMMS will then initiate a meeting with DCAM within the next week to discuss short-term upgrades and renovation plans. Long-term plans will be discussed at a later date.

Avian Influenza Exercise (S. Smole)

S. Smole and A. DeMaria attended a simulation exercise (BIRDFLUPLEX) hosted and organized by Abt Associates on Saturday, February 4. The goal of the exercise was to test and evaluate the avian influenza pandemic preparedness and readiness of State and local government, public and private organizations and individuals. All participants actively participated in pre-arranged roles.

Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory

SLI has applied to be designated as a reference lab level with influenza A/H5 real-time RT-PCR testing capabilities through the LRN.

The DPH influenza guidance document is in the final draft stages.

BioWatch

A BioWatch tabletop exercise will be held on Thursday, February 9. The tabletop scenario was designed to focus on communication and notification procedures during an event.

Bacteriology Laboratories (J. Peppe)

Pertussis PCR testing was slowed due to a resignation, but staff are catching up with the workload.

IT (D. Caloggero)

The ELR environment was activated over the weekend, and the DNS address was pointed to other servers. No problems were reported. This deployment will allow the CD Bureau to roll out their electronic reporting piece and will allow the Lab Bureau to receive blood lead test reports from other laboratories.

The ITD Bond Investment brief to upgrade the HIV and Lead Laboratory LIMS was completed.

The Division of Health Care Quality sent a letter to over 5000 laboratories/providers in Massachusetts to announce the relocation of the Clinical Laboratory Program to 99 Chauncy Street in Boston. The Clinical Laboratory Program is responsible for overseeing CLIA and State licensure functions. Some hospitals and providers misunderstood the memorandum and thought the State Laboratory Institute Lab Bureau had relocated. Lab samples started to arrive at the Chauncy Street offices starting January 25. HCQ sent a clarification memo out on February 3.

Bacterial Surveillance Laboratories (J. Fontana)

A meeting will be set up to discuss the potential involvement of CDC staff into the Fenway Community Health Center's 25 isolates of MRSA that have an unusual resistance pattern.

Bioterrorism Response Laboratory (C. Gauthier)

A meeting will be held at the Commissioner's Office on Friday, February 10 to discuss the use of hand-held field screening of suspect bioterror threat specimens.

C. Gauthier was accepted to participate in a CDC-sponsored multi-center validation study for a new water processing protocol on March 8, 2006, and 32 states are participating in this study. This protocol will enable Laboratory Response Network (LRN) labs to process large quantities of potable water for subsequent testing utilizing existing LRN assays. As part of the study, the BT lab will receive three aliquots to be used to spike our own water. The water will be tested using PCR, TRF, and culture methods.

Management Services (K. Nawn)

The Division of Health Care Quality (HCQ) sent a letter to over 5000 laboratories/providers in Massachusetts to announce the relocation of the Clinical Laboratory Program to 99 Chauncy Street in Boston. The Clinical Laboratory Program is responsible for overseeing CLIA and State licensure functions. Some hospitals and providers misunderstood the memorandum and thought the State Laboratory Institute Lab Bureau had relocated. Lab samples started to arrive at the Chauncy Street offices starting January 25. HCQ sent a clarification memo out on February 3, and the DPH Courier is transporting misdirected specimens to the State Laboratory Institute.

Training (G. Greer)

On February 15 a CDC teleconference on the molecular epidemiology of noroviruses will be held in Room 202. On February 23 a CDC teleconference will be held regarding updates to packaging and shipping regulations in Room 133.

Drug Laboratories (C. Salemi)

C. Salemi attended the Forensic Sciences Advisory Committee meeting on January 10. Funding issues and a potential consolidation of services with the State Police was discussed. A. DeMaria, A. Stevenson, and C. Salemi will meet regarding these issues.

Laboratory Emergency Preparedness (M. Grazioplene)

P. Madigan, T. Rivera, and M. Grazioplene met to discuss access to secure wings during an emergency event. Access to the basement stairwell and sections of the 3rd floor, 4th floor, and 7th floors will be limited to staff who work on the particular floor. UMMS janitorial staff will have access to the floor(s) on which they work, and several UMMS IT staff who deal with telecom issues will have full access. UMMS staff who work on a secured wing will have access to that wing. Several senior UMMS facilities staff will also have access to all areas.

Updated documents (Laboratory Triage Guidelines for First Responders and the BT/CT specimen submission form for environmental samples) were approved by SLI staff and have been sent to the DPH Emergency Preparedness Cluster members for final review. An in-house training calendar for SLI emergency preparedness-related trainings will be developed.

Please email the names of representatives for the Specimen Inventory Committee and the BSL-3 Committee to M. Grazioplene.

BSL-3 Renovations

P. Jankauskas, M. Grazioplene, and UMMS staff attended a presentation by RDK Engineers regarding the TB Laboratory renovations. The renovation of the TB Lab was intended to add BSL-3 lab space for surge capacity purposes, but some engineering staff do not believe that the air handling system could handle a hood that exhausts 100% outside the building. Further studies will be performed by RDK, and follow-up meetings will be held to discuss this issue.

Training (M. Stowell)

M. Stowell and G. Greer will develop a biosafety cabinet training for hospital laboratories in Massachusetts.